



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

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## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

### **PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action**

**1. Project Title:** Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association – Deep Creek Range

**2. Type of Proposed Action:** Range Improvements: (1) Extension of the Wilson Firing Line Cover; (2) Construct 100 Yard Rifle Range with Covered Firing Line & Benches (see Part I, section 10).

**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:**

The Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association (HCSA) has two sites: (1) The Deep Creek Range approximately 100 acres located on Fish, Wildlife & Parks leased property adjacent to the Deep Creek State Fishing Access Site about seven miles Northwest of Missoula, MT. (2) West Riverside Range (East Missoula), which has an indoor and outdoor small bore range, located off of Highway 200 east of Missoula. This EA covers only projects on the Deep Creek Range (See Maps 1-3).

**4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The 2007 Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges for public purposes. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

**5. Need for the Action(s):**

**Project 1** – The Wilson Firing Line is frequently very busy and new firing positions are necessary to provide room for the extra shooters. Additional shooting positions are also needed for the State and Regional Schuetzen matches.

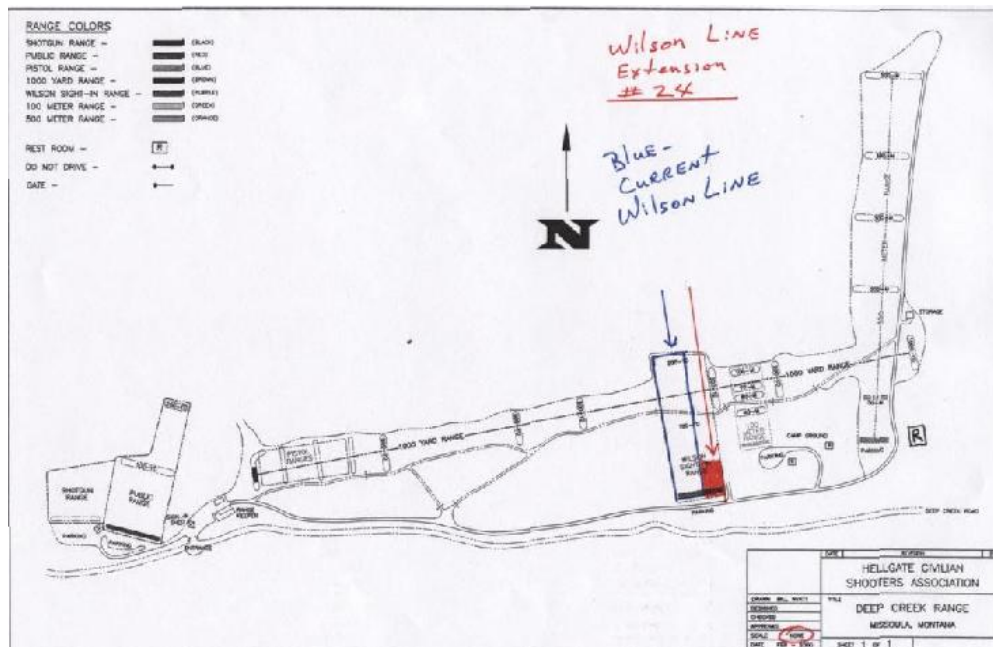
**Project 2** – Other ranges are frequently busy during the hunting season (siting-in) and during competitions. The additional 100 yard range will alleviate the pressure on the other ranges and provide additional shooting opportunities.

**6. Objectives for the Action(s):** The objectives for the proposed projects answer the needs stated in Part I, section 5. Consequently, the extension on the Wilson Firing Line and construction of a new 100 yard range will relieve range congestion, improve accessibility, and expand shooting opportunities, while improving safety and security.

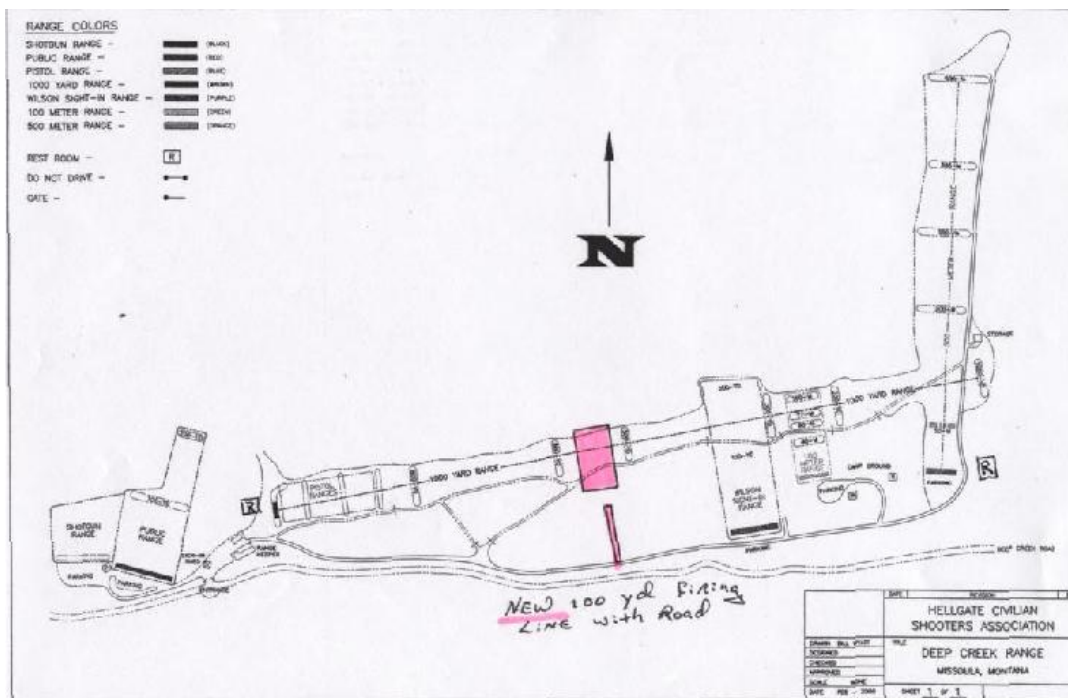
## 7. Area Maps



**Map 1 – Area map showing location of the Deep Creek Range Site**



**Map 2 – Wilson Firing Line Extension**



**Map 3 – 100 yard firing line and road**

**8. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:**

The Deep Creek Range site is 100 acres and is leased from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks and is administered by the Region 2 Parks Division. The proposed projects with the improvements safely spread out within the leased properties as indicated on Maps 2 and 3.

**9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):**

All projects on the Deep Creek Range site are all on the existing open shooting range located in a forested area of predominantly Ponderosa Pine. Most of the range area is heavily forested with new growth. There are no live streams, irrigation ditches or ponds on the site. No delineated wetlands.

**10. Description of Project:**

**Project 1** – Extension of the existing Wilson Firing Line, within the Deep Creek Range site, which includes pouring additional concrete for the pad, adding 4 shooting benches, and extending the roof over the firing line.



**Figure 1 – Concrete shooting benches proposed for Wilson Firing Line Extension & new 100 yard range.**



**Figure 2 – Wilson Firing Line with proposed extension of concrete pad & roof.**



**Project 2** – Construct a new 100 yard range with 8 concrete shooting benches (Figure 1) and covered firing line, such as shown in Figure 2. Some trees will be removed for the new firing line and access road, as shown in figure 3, with an individual standing at point of the firing line. Only the minimum number of trees will be removed to accommodate the new facility and road. Figure 4 shows down range view for new range, with individual standing at about the 100 yard target line.



**Figure 3 – Area of new firing line and access road.**



**Figure 4 – Down range view and “back-stop” area for new 100 yard range.**

**11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

None

**Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

**Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	*\$16,793.30
*\$5,133.80 (Wilson Firing Line Extension) and \$11,662.50 (100 yard New Range)	

**12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:**

FWP- Hunter Education Program, 4-H Club, Missoula County Sheriff's Dept., Montana Highway Patrol, Missoula City Police Department, and R-2 Game Wardens .

**13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:** Proposed range improvements proposals have been discussed within the membership of the club, with R-2 FWP, and with the associated project vendors and contractors.

**14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Hellgate Civilian Shooter's Association project managers

**15. Names, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Roger Hinthier, 3840 Spurgin, Missoula, MT 59804, 543-3075

**16. Other Pertinent Information:**

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 15, 2009.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

**Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)**

**Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.**

<b>Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				<b>X</b>		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				<b>X</b>		<b>#2</b>
3. Introduction of new species into an area				<b>X</b>		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				<b>X</b>		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				<b>X</b>		<b>#5</b>
6. Existing water right or reservation				<b>X</b>		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				<b>X</b>		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				<b>X</b>		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				<b>X</b>		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				<b>X</b>		
11. Aesthetics				<b>X</b>		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**2. & 5.** There are no live streams, irrigation ditches or ponds on the site. No delineated wetlands.

**Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.**

<b>Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				<b>X</b>		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				<b>X</b>		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				<b>X</b>		
4. Agricultural production				<b>X</b>		<b>#4</b>
5. Human health				<b>X</b>		<b>#5</b>
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				<b>X</b>		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				<b>X</b>		<b>#6</b>
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				<b>X</b>		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				<b>X</b>		
10. Demands for government services				<b>X</b>		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				<b>X</b>		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**4.** This site is adjacent to the national forest lands which have cattle leases and timber harvest operations on the forest. Adjacent area is used primarily for recreation.

**5.** Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large. A very comprehensive safety plan and well posted safety guidelines are in evidence throughout the range complex.

**7.** Range will provide year round access and handicapped accessibility and provides a public use



range. Cooperating organizations are aware of the improved range options and the club has a long history of cooperation with hunter education classes, 4-H, Sheriff's Department, Game Wardens, local police departments and other law enforcement & youth groups for training and instructional facilities. A public range is provided and range facilities are handicapped accessible.

### **Part III. Environmental Consequences**

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?** NO

**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?** This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

#### **Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:**

The proposed alternative A, alternative B (no action alternative) were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, section 10 (Description of Project). With overall improvement projects that involves extending the Wilson Firing Line and construction of a new 100 yard range.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without proposed improvements and expansion.

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the proposed alternative to extend the Wilson Firing Line and construct a new 100 yard range. The no action alternative would be to not fund the improvements and the range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

#### **Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**

NONE

#### **Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association  
MT Fish Wildlife and Park

#### **PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the projects reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range/altere d areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The long relationship that the Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association has with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, hunter education, youth groups, local law enforcement and the Missoula community in general all indicate support of the proposed alternative. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative for the extension of the Wilson Firing Line shelter and construction of a new 100 yard range.

**EA prepared by:** GENE R. HICKMAN  
Ecological Assessments  
Helena, MT 59602

**Date Completed:** July 14, 2009

#### **PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

**Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:**

None required.

**Describe public involvement, if any:**

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the **Missoulian** newspaper starting August 7, announcing the 30-day public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.